

Kentucky Adult Education Content Standards

Introduction: The Kentucky Adult Education Content Standards document represents the skills students need to know to pursue skilled and high- and well-paying jobs and continuing education. It provides a framework to inform adult education assessment, curricula, and instruction to prepare adult students with what they need to know to meet the expectations of the workforce and postsecondary education.

Background: Kentucky was one of five states (Indiana, Massachusetts, Nevada, and Texas were the other four) that participated in the American Diploma Project (ADP), <http://www.achieve.org>. Kentucky was the only state to include adult education as a state partner. The project produced a set of benchmarks that describe the specific Language Arts and Mathematics knowledge and skills that graduates (high school and GED) must master if they are to succeed in postsecondary education or in high-performance, high-growth jobs in the New Economy.

KYAE committed to developing content standards for adult education that align with the ADP. KYAE submitted an application and was granted an opportunity to join a content standards consortium of states developing adult education content standards provided by the Office of Vocational and Adult Education, U.S. Department of Education.

KYAE formed a Content Standards Advisory Group consisting of members from the business community, four-year universities, community and technical colleges, and adult education programs, as well as others. After soliciting input from the Advisory Group, KYAE assembled two work groups comprised of content experts from adult and postsecondary education to develop content standards for mathematics, reading and English (writing).

The content experts considered what skills were necessary for adults to enter skilled work and continue their education. The groups reviewed nationally recognized standards, including standards from other states, and a variety of other resources. After much consideration, the content experts agreed to use or modify the ADP benchmarks to shape Kentucky's adult education standards. * The benchmarks were sufficiently broad, understandable, and comprehensive.

Levels: As recommended by the Advisory Group, content experts categorized each benchmark into three tiers (described below). The tiers are described in terms of jobs students may choose to pursue.

- **Anchor** level skills represent those skills necessary for GED attainment. Students at this level may not have mastered the skills needed for entry into postsecondary credit-bearing coursework. These skills are needed for entry-level occupations.
- **Essential** level skills represent those skills necessary for entry into postsecondary certification and degree programs. Students at this level have mastered *most* of the skills needed for postsecondary credit-bearing coursework. These skills are needed for occupations requiring additional training or credentialing.
- **Gateway** level skills represent those skills necessary for degree-seeking students entering postsecondary credit-bearing coursework. These skills are needed to pursue highly skilled occupations.

* **NOTE:** Not all ADP benchmarks were considered appropriate for the purposes of this document.

The content experts also considered that some reasoning skills were needed, which went beyond any one content area. These reasoning skills are in addition to acquiring procedural skills. Students need them to master the more subjective skills of reading, interpreting and representing problems. They are needed to make judgments about what problem needs to be solved. The following reasoning and communication skills should be woven throughout the adult education instructional content. These skills are adapted from the skills referenced on page 55 of the ADP document “Ready or Not: Creating a High School Diploma That Counts” (Achieve, 2004). These skills include:

- Using inductive and deductive reasoning to arrive at valid conclusions.
- Using multiple representations (literal, symbolic, graphic) to represent problems and solutions.
- Understanding the role of definitions, proofs and counter-examples in reasoning and constructing simple arguments.
- Using special symbols correctly and precisely (for example in mathematics and composition).
- Recognizing when an estimate or approximation is more appropriate than an exact answer and understanding the limits on precision of approximations.
- Distinguishing relevant from irrelevant information, identifying missing information and either finding what is needed or making appropriate estimates.
- Recognizing and clarifying structures (often mathematical structures) that are embedded in other contexts.
- When solving problems, thinking ahead about strategy, testing ideas with special cases, trying different approaches, checking for errors and reasonableness of solutions as a regular part of routine work, and devising independent ways to verify results.
- Shifting regularly between the specific and the general, using examples to understand general ideas, and extending specific results to more general cases to gain insight.

Glossary and Terms:

ADP	The American Diploma Project
Adapted	The ADP benchmark was modified.
Additional skill	An ADP benchmark representing this skill did not exist. Content experts inserted what was considered a necessary sub-skill.
Additional sub-skill	An ADP benchmark did not have a sub-skill. Content experts inserted what they considered a necessary skill.
C	Communication
Kentucky Core Content	Kentucky Department of Education’s Core Content was referenced for this skill.
R	Reading
Self-explanatory	The difference between the skill levels, anchor, essential, and gateway, is apparent. No example is necessary.
W	Writing

Resources:

The American Diploma Project, “Ready or Not, Creating a High School Diploma That Counts,” Achieve, Inc., The Education Trust, and Fordham, 2002

Kentucky Core Content (will add bibliographical information)

ACT, WorkKeys (will add bibliographical information)

“What Does the GED Tests Measure?” GED Testing Service, unpublished manuscript, 2004

(Will add multiple resources.)

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